

CHAPTER 4

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PARK RANGERS AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

GS 05-11

4-1. Career Development Plan for Park Rangers and Specialists. The Career paths for park rangers and specialists involve several levels. Park rangers and specialists are both discussed within this section and their pathways are incorporated into a single diagram (Figure 4-1) because of the similarities of the two groups and possibilities of interchange between the two paths. Most members of these two groups aspire to similar key management and leadership positions (at project, area, district, division, and headquarters) within the natural resources management element and the ACTEDS system.

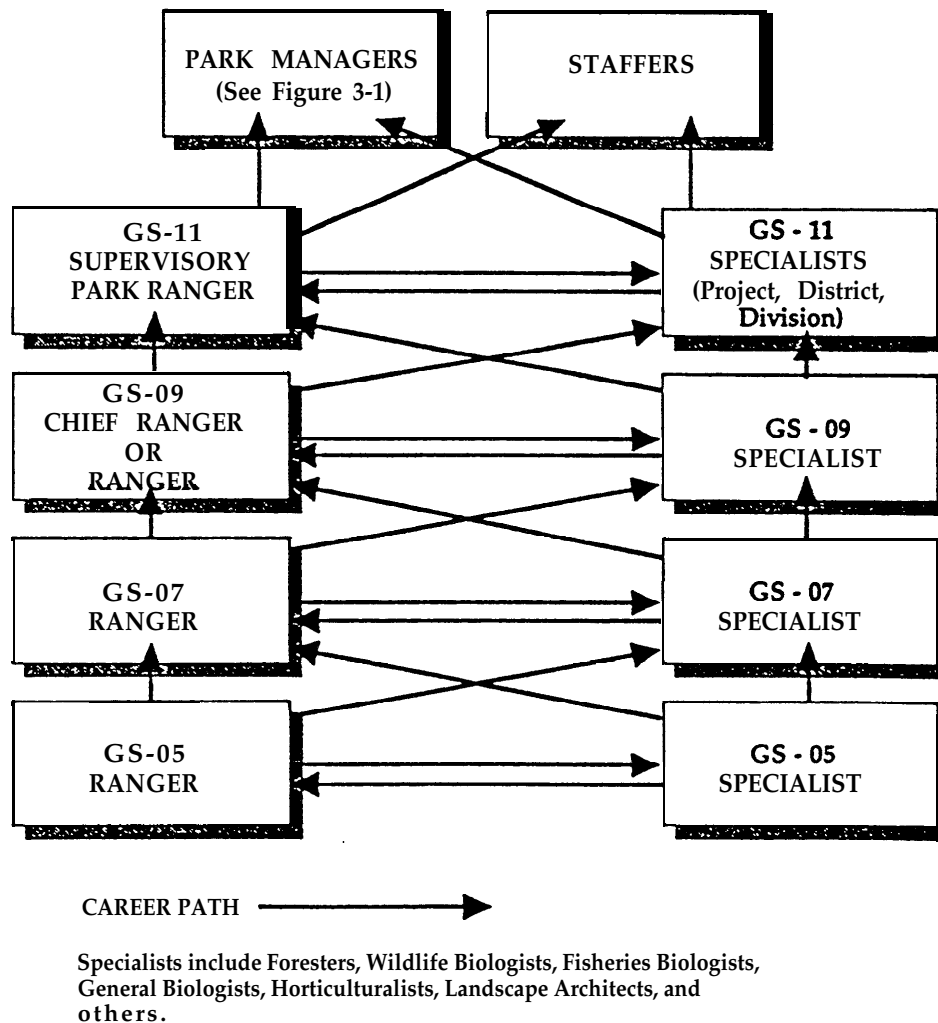


FIGURE 4-1. CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PARK RANGERS AND SPECIALISTS

4-2. Description of Duties - Park Ranger, GS-0025/05-11. This series includes teams members who supervise, manage, and/or perform work in the stewardship of Federal lands, waters, and park resources at Corps operated and maintained projects. Functions include park management; natural, historical, and cultural resource management; real property and shoreline management; environmental compliance practices; visitor protection and assistance; and the development of interpretive and recreational programs for the benefit of the public. Positions are graded from a level of GS 05 to GS 11. Supervisory duties may exist at both the GS 09 and 11 levels, depending upon local circumstances at a project office. The target grade for the trainee position is the GS 09 level.

4-3. Description of Duties - Technical Positions, GSS-0025 and others/02-07. These positions are generally graded from the GS 02-07 level and do not require the advanced education and experience of the professional trainee position which lead to GS 09. Although park rangers and natural resources technicians in these positions require certain technical training in order to fulfill their job requirements, training is completed on an “as needed” basis to meet current job requirements and workload.

4-4. Description of Duties - Natural Resources Management Specialists, Job Series Vary, GS-0025/05-11. This category of positions includes several occupational series such as foresters, general biologists, archaeologists, fisheries biologists, wildlife biologists, range managers, and landscape architects (see Table 4-1). Specialists perform complex professional and scientific work (in addition to those items performed by park rangers), that require very specialized training in a variety of technical areas. The specialist routinely interacts with other specialists and the general park ranger staff to communicate and coordinate management programs and budgets. Positions are generally graded from a level of GS 05 to GS 11, with a GS 12 possible under certain circumstances. Supervisory duties may exist at GS 11 or GS 12 levels, depending upon local circumstances.

4-5. Educational Requirements. The Corps park ranger and natural resources specialist perform complex professional and scientific work. They are involved in the development, management, conservation, and protection of Federal lands and waters where recreation activities and land management inherently impact the ecosystem. Because management of these ecosystems for multiple uses and benefits is required to meet public needs, individuals within these positions require skills that often transcend several existing professional series. The major focus of positions within this group of series is the integration of natural resources and recreation management. Most park rangers have completed a full four-year course of study at an accredited college or university with a bachelors or higher degree that includes at least the equivalent of 30 semester hours of course work in natural resources and/or recreation. In some cases, experience has been substituted for portions of the academic requirements.

TABLE 4-1. LIST OF TYPICAL NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST POSITIONS

POSITION	CLASSIFICATION
Archaeologist	GS-0193
Biologist	GS-0401
Botanist	GS-0430
Ecologist	GS-0408
Entomologist	GS-0414
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS-0028
Fisheries Biologist	GS-0482
Forester	GS-0460
Horticulturist	GS-0437
Landscape Architect	GS-0807
Museum Specialist	GS-1016
Range Conservationist	GS-0454
Soils Scientist	GS-0470
Wildlife Biologist	GS-0486

4-6. Formal Classroom Training. Individuals who become park rangers and natural resources management specialists for the Corps come to the job with a wide variety of educational backgrounds and skills. Several basic courses have been developed to provide this entire group of team members with similar knowledge and skills in selected technical areas. Mandatory training is particularly important in areas such as visitor assistance, where the team member must interpret and implement policy and make subjective decisions. Table 4-2 identifies training that should be obtained in order to progress upward through the career path established for natural resources management.

4-7. Technical Courses (Classroom and Correspondence). Technical short courses and correspondence courses are often necessary or required to perform specific tasks. These tasks may be similar or they may be site specific, and vary significantly from one geographic part of the United States to another. Table 4-3 presents examples of some available non site-specific technical courses. The Department of Defense and other Federal agencies offer a variety of correspondence courses. The needs of the various specialist series are highly technical and cannot be listed here. These requirements are jointly developed by the team member and the supervisor or training officer and should become part of a team member's individual development plan.

4-8. Developmental Assignments. The successful completion of developmental assignments provides park rangers and specialists opportunities to work with and become familiar with natural resources management policy, all aspects of

management, and gain an understanding of how the various organizational levels of the natural resources management element interact with one another. These experiences are also designed to prepare the park ranger and the specialist for advancement to district, area, division, and headquarters positions. Developmental assignments should occur at locations other than the home office of the participant. Developmental assignments corresponding to the various grade levels are indicated in Table 4-4.

TABLE 4-2. FORMAL COURSES FOR PARK RANGERS AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

GRADE	(REQUIREMENT)	COURSE DESCRIPTION	SOURCE
GS 05	(M)	Visitor Assistance	Huntsville
	(HR)	Communications - Letter/Technical Report Writing	Varies
	(HR)	Contracting Overview - (video available)	Huntsville
	(HR)	Computer Applications	Varies
	(HR)	Intern Leadership Development (1)	CAL
GS 07	(M)	Admin. of Operations and Maintenance Contracts	Huntsville
	(HR)	Communications - Public Speaking	Varies
GS 09	(HR)	Supervisor Development Course (3)	DA (2)
	(HR)	Communications and Public Involvement	Varies
	(HR)	Interpretive Services (3)	Huntsville
	(HR)	Leadership Education and Development	CAL
	(R)	Budget Training	Huntsville
	(R)	Advanced Admin. of Operations & Maint. Contracts	Huntsville
GS 11	(M)	Advanced Admin. of Operations & Maint. Contracts	Huntsville
	(HR)	Visitor Assistance (Update)	Huntsville
	(HR)	Instructional Methods	Huntsville
	(HR)	Public Awareness/Conflict Resolution	Varies
	(R)	Supervision and Group Performance	Varies
	(R)	Human Resources I and II	Huntsville
	(R)	Environmental Laws and Regulations	Huntsville

(M) Mandatory

(HR) Highly Recommended

(R) Recommended

(1) Mandatory for interns GS 5-9 (Not open to others)Mandatory for supervisors

(2) Correspondence course provided by Army Institute for Professional Development

(3) If not accomplished at a lower level

DA - Department of the Army Institute for Professional Development

CAL - Center for Army Leadership, Training and Doctrine Command

Huntsville - Huntsville Training Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Varies - Offered by the Office of Personnel Management, Universities, local vendors, Corps District or Division sponsored, etc.

TABLE 4-3. TECHNICAL COURSES FOR PARK RANGERS AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS ****Huntsville (PROSPECT) Courses***

Visitation Estimation and Reporting System
Cultural Resources: Identification, Analysis, and Evaluation
Environmental Laws and Regulations
Real Estate Management and Disposal
Regulatory Functions I, II, III, and IV

University Courses (The following examples are typical of listings found on the Natural Resources Management Career Development Bulletin Board)

Campground Design and Management (University of Tennessee at Martin)
Multiple Resources Use Workshop (University of Georgia) (404) 542-1328
Forest and Vegetative Management (North Carolina State) (919) 737-7567
University Sponsored Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources Management Correspondence Course

Other – Training Sources Identified Through Human Resources

Natural Resources Management System (NRMS) workshops (when offered by headquarters)
Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
Time Management and Goal Setting
Introduction to Federal Projects and Historic Preservation Law (The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation) (202) 786-0505
The Archaeological Resource Protection Act for Land Managers (NPS) (202) 343-4113
Pre-Supervisory Workshop (on-site by OPM)
Oil Spill Response
Disaster Response Training
Boat Operator Instructor's Course (sponsored by headquarters)
Multi-media first aid
CPR
First Responder or Emergency Medical Technician Training
Dam Safety
Pesticide Applicator Certification
Aquatic Plant Management
Boat Operator Training
Defensive Driving
Professional association-sponsored training for CEUs (for retention of professional certification or status)
Total quality management

* See Career Development Bulletin Board for more current listing

TABLE 4-4. DEVELOPMENTAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR PARK RANGERS AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

GRADE	LOCATION	TYPE AND DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT
GS 05	Project	(M) Minimum one week away from home office in a cross-training position
GS 07	Project	(M) Minimum one week away from home office in a cross-training position
	District	(HR) Minimum one-week rotational assignment within an organization such as engineering, planning, real estate, contracting, or safety
GS 09	District	(HR) Minimum two-week rotational assignment within district natural resources management office
GS 11	District	(HR) Minimum one-month rotational in district natural resources office
	District	(R) Minimum two-week rotational assignment within district planning office or research laboratory
	DA	(R) Minimum one-week assignment at facilities engineering (natural resources office)

(M) Mandatory

(HR) Highly Recommended

(R) Recommended

Note: ACTEDS may require assignments of longer duration than indicated here.

4-9. On-The-Job Training Experience. On-the-job training ensures that the park ranger and the specialist have the opportunity to work with and become familiar with the many aspects of natural resources management. These experiences are displayed in Table 4-5 and are expected to have occurred by the time you are a journeyman ranger. These experiences would be obtained during a period of cross-training between natural resources, park management, maintenance/contracting, and office management functions, either at, or away from, the home project. While team members are not routinely assigned to maintenance-type duties, this phase of the program prepares the individual for future management positions. A permanent change of duty station between districts and/or divisions is highly recommended at the GS 11 level, particularly for those park rangers and specialists who aspire to management positions. The varied experiences gained can enhance advancement opportunities for team members.

TABLE 4-5. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING EXPERIENCE FOR PARK RANGERS AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS***Policies and Procedures***

Study and review project master plans and operational management plans
Study and review project shoreline management plan or policy
Review ERGO manual

Natural Resources Management

Study and review Section 10 and 404 permit procedures
Participate in planning and implementation of land management activities to include soils, forest, range, fisheries, and wildlife management
Review erosion control techniques, demonstrate ability to determine control needs
Participate in dam operating procedures and reporting requirements:

- piezometer reading procedures
- instrumentation procedures
- data collection

Participate in boundary line maintenance and inspection activities and/or assist in the administration of boundary contracts
Participate in real estate compliance and utilization inspections
Study and review historic properties regulations and laws
Demonstrate ability to interpret maps, aerial photographs, survey plats, and demonstrate basic understanding of survey equipment
Participate in environmental compliance assessment of an operating project

Recreation Management

Study and review the sign manual
Study and participate in administration of the recreation user fee program
Prepare monthly visitation reports
Assist in preparation of natural resources management system (NRMS) annual updates
Demonstrate an understanding of and participate in recreation marketing
Demonstrate an understanding of recreation use surveys
Prepare and present interpretive programs and/or conduct tours
Prepare and present programs to civic clubs and organizations
Participate in public, employee, and contractor safety programs
Review and participate in facilities design, construction, and maintenance

Visitor Assistance

Demonstrate understanding of visitor assistance program
Review search and rescue procedures
Attend Federal magistrate court and observe courtroom procedures and demeanor

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(continued) TABLE 4-5. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING EXPERIENCE FOR PARK RANGERS AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

Maintenance

Participate in preparation and administration of O&M contracts
Assist in development of maintenance management plans

Administration

Demonstrate ability to use micro computers in accomplishing operational tasks
Demonstrate ability to communicate in writing
Participate in budget preparation
Participate in administrative operations
Gain knowledge of authorized project purposes
O& M contracts

4-10. Park Ranger and Natural Resources Management Specialist Training Programs. The natural resources management elements of most divisions and districts have developed formal training programs, usually two years in duration, that provide team members with the wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for GS 09 positions. The team member usually enters at the GS 05 level, and after satisfactorily completing a one-year formal training plan, is promoted to the GS 07 level without competition. After successful completion of a second year of formal training, the team member is promoted to the journeyman GS 09 park ranger position without competition. Natural resources management specialists are encouraged to participate in this formal training program to the same extent that park rangers participate. Certain portions of this training program are so essential to the development of fully functional Corps park rangers and natural resources management specialists that it is mandatory that those courses be completed before the team member can be advanced to the next higher appropriate grade level. The natural resources management branch chief may grant an exception and advance a team member (other than technical positions) to the next grade level if the ability to attend or schedule mandatory training is beyond the control of the team member and the team member's supervisor (i.e., lack of funds or training spaces). The team member should then be eligible for promotion to the next grade interval with the understanding that the mandatory training will be scheduled within the next two years. A waiver does not eliminate the requirement for course completion at a later date.

4-11. Career Advancement Paths. The Park Ranger/Park Manager GS-0025 Series provides the primary pool from which park managers and staffers (district, division, and headquarters) are selected. Managers and staffers also come from the ranks of the natural resources management specialists. The career paths express a number of options that are available to the team member. Movement by specific paths requires

that the team member make a series of decisions. Team members should select the paths that best meet their particular career goals.